


Creating Public Value Through the Arts

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What do we mean by public value?


An Example

- ◆ Rural community of Choteau, Montana
 - ◆ Population 1,741 – Isolated rural area
 - ◆ Performing Arts League is the only established arts organization in the County
 - ◆ Provides artistic programs for community through live theatre and concerts
 - ◆ Struggles to maintain its rapidly aging core audience and season ticket subscribers
 - ◆ Provides 5 concerts each season
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Ideas they tried...

- ◆ Looked at lists of people not attending
 - ◆ Made phone calls to citizens urging them to purchase tickets
 - ◆ Prices were reasonable: \$25 for five shows
 - ◆ People not interested in committing to four or five shows
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Ideas they tried ...

- ◆ Price was reasonable – cost was not the reason
 - ◆ Board members sought information from many sources as to the cause
 - ◆ Enlisted help of local business coaches
 - ◆ Read books such as Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*
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What did they do?

- ◆ Challenge was to develop a younger audience
 - ◆ Decided to focus on young audience development
 - ◆ Focused effort on one school
 - ◆ Asked the question, "How to we get students excited to come to a concert?"
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Their Experimental Approach

- ◆ Looked at the artist in residence idea
 - ◆ Had local artists do workshops for kids in different school settings
 - ◆ Dancers worked with cheerleaders in a hip-hop workshop
 - ◆ Offered a swing workshop for all students in the gym on Friday night
 - ◆ Students attended concert on Saturday night
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Results

- ◆ Concentrated efforts into 3-days of activity with high school students
 - ◆ Culminated in evening performance at performing arts center with large number of students in attendance
 - ◆ One high school girl commented, "It was the best weekend I've had since I've been in high school."
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Results

- ◆ Performing Arts League began by utilizing local artists
 - ◆ Invested in the local community
 - ◆ Later built on and leveraged initial experimental success by bringing in nationally prominent performers
 - ◆ Added drumming workshop titled, "Community Building through Hand Drumming"
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Results in Community Building

- ◆ Worked with students at four-room elementary school
 - ◆ Built 12 West African drums
 - ◆ Each classroom was sponsored by a different family-run ranch
 - ◆ A large crowd of students, teachers, parents, grandparents, and siblings came to see their family brands burned into the school's new drums
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Community Building

- ◆ School became community gathering place
 - ◆ Community spirit developed and sense of pride about family-run ranches in the area
 - ◆ Students learned to make drums
 - ◆ Drums were left as musical legacy for the school
 - ◆ Students learned about West Africa
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Philosophical and Political Ideas About Public Value

- ◆ Art for Art's Sake – Heart and soul
 - ◆ Audience Development – Supporting artists and arts organizations
 - ◆ Community Development – Building strong communities
 - ◆ Social Development – Giving individuals choices for how they spend their time
 - ◆ Economic Benefits – Developing a creative economy and arts-related employment
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A little history on arts councils

- ◆ There are 56 tax-financed governmental organizations (one in every state and six regional groups)
- ◆ States began establishing arts organizations (Utah in 1899, Minnesota in 1903, followed by a few others)
- ◆ The creation of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 provided incentive for other states
- ◆ Federal funding motivated the development of state arts agencies in order to receive federal funds for the arts


Utah Arts Council beginnings

- ◆ Alice Merrill Horne, second woman legislator in Utah initiated efforts
 - ◆ Mission: To advance the arts in all their “phases”
 - ◆ A school teacher who encouraged students to purchase artwork
 - ◆ If an artist can't feed his/her family, they can't paint
 - ◆ State's Art Collection was initiated
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Evolution of the Utah Arts Council

- ◆ A volunteer-run organization for many years
 - ◆ Hired director and assistant in the 60's
 - ◆ Staff expanded with NEA funding and match by Utah Legislature in the 60's
 - ◆ Structured as a discipline-based model including visual arts, literary arts, folk arts, arts education, and public art
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Utah Arts Council

- ◆ As federal challenge funds become available, organization responded with programs to tap federal funds
 - ◆ Initiative to fund local arts councils by NEA was matched with Utah funds and local arts council staff hired
 - ◆ Organization structures dependent on NEA funding streams
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What We Currently Do

- ◆ Give grants to artists, non-profit organizations, teachers and schools
 - ◆ Act as a resource for information and provide technical assistance
 - ◆ Advocate for the arts and influence public policy
 - ◆ Maintain and build the state's art collection
 - ◆ Mentor and assist artists and leaders through professional development opportunities
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The Political Authorizing Environment


- ◆ Who plays a key role in advancing the arts?
 - ◆ Governing structures that authorize and legitimize the arts include:
 - The Governor and his staff
 - The Legislature
 - Local elected officials
 - The media
 - Interest groups such as arts organizations
 - Voters and taxpayers
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Political Authorizing Environments


- ◆ Over the past few years, nationally, the environment has not been particularly favorable
 - ◆ Some states have seen drastic funding cuts or threats of elimination
 - ◆ This compels us to examine what our most important public purposes should be to build grassroots support
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Important Public Purposes


What are They?

- ◆ To support art and artists because they are particularly worthy?
 - ◆ Because they are particularly needy?
 - ◆ Because arts and artists will achieve some other important goals of the state such as quality education or increased economic development?
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Questions for the Future

- ◆ What are our most important public purposes?
 - ◆ How should we be organized to provide most public value for citizens of the state?
 - ◆ How do we advance and elevate the importance of the arts?
 - ◆ What role should we play and who should our partners be?
 - ◆ How can we best affect public policy?
 - ◆ What do we do to maximize our resources?
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What is the Vision for the Future?

- ◆ Establish the arts as the foundation for building communities in the State?
 - ◆ Expand the state's economy through creative industries and employment?
 - ◆ Reach children and positively affect their lives through art?
 - ◆ Give young people another, better choice for how to spend their time for social concerns?
 - ◆ Inspire creatively-driven skills for generation of young people for our future?
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What is the Vision?

- ◆ Provide more professional support for artists?
 - ◆ Collaborate with arts organizations?
 - ◆ Raise the visibility of the arts locally, nationally and internationally?
 - ◆ Provide research and data and develop a compelling case for the importance of the arts?
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What is the Vision?

- ◆ Make the connection between economic development and the arts?
 - ◆ Prepare a creatively-driven workforce?
 - ◆ Generate jobs based on creative economies rather than industrial economies?
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How to Reach that Vision?

- ◆ Affect leaders and impact public policy?
 - ◆ Elect inspired leadership who value arts?
 - ◆ Build the capacity of local arts organizations throughout the state?
 - ◆ Get parents, young people, and community leaders engaged in the vision?
 - ◆ Become effective grassroots advocates?
 - ◆ Work independently or collaboratively?
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A Call to Action

- ◆ Decide what your vision for the arts is in your community
 - ◆ Build support for that vision
 - ◆ Develop relationships with your elected officials
 - ◆ Become articulate and passionate about the case for why the arts are important
 - ◆ Get young people engaged in the arts
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Call to Action

- ◆ Establish more effective lines of communication
 - ◆ Use technology to extend your reach
 - ◆ Market and promote the arts in cultural tourism efforts
 - ◆ Increase funding for the arts at all levels of government
 - ◆ Engage many in the effort
 - ◆ Build on one another's successes
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